KITCHEN SINK COMIX
DEATH RATTLE
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#5
Mature Readers
M.A. NELSON SYC '96

DEATH RATTLE™

DEATH
Takes the Hindmost!

You can't run and you can't hide when Death comes calling, and this issue brings you death in its loveliest forms. Swiss surrealist Thomas Ott brings sweet dreams of suicide to life in powerful wordless scratchboard comics, and we preview the work of newcomers Matthew Coyle and Peter Lamb from their forthcoming graphic novel *Registry of Death,* hard-edge SF of a future where the different are hunted and abbatoirs are art galleries. There's more SF in the zombie-haunted conclusion of Matt Howarth's "Klemdiggers," and Tom Sutton continues his tale of the horrors of biology gone awry in the second installment of the bizarre "Dr. Wrotwang's Wratzwerks." It's the deadliest issue yet of the resurrected *Death Rattle!*

Cover
Mark Nelson

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Thomas Ott

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Matthew Coyle
and Peter Lamb

Klemdiggers 16
Matt Howarth

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Tom Sutton

publisher **Denis Kitchen** editors **Chris Couch** and **Catherine Garnier**
designer **Douglas Bantz** art director **Amie Brockway** senior vp, production **Jim Kitchen** executive vp **Scott Hyman**
senior vp, chief financial officer **Dean Zirolli** senior director, sales and marketing **Jamie Riehle**

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GOODBYE!
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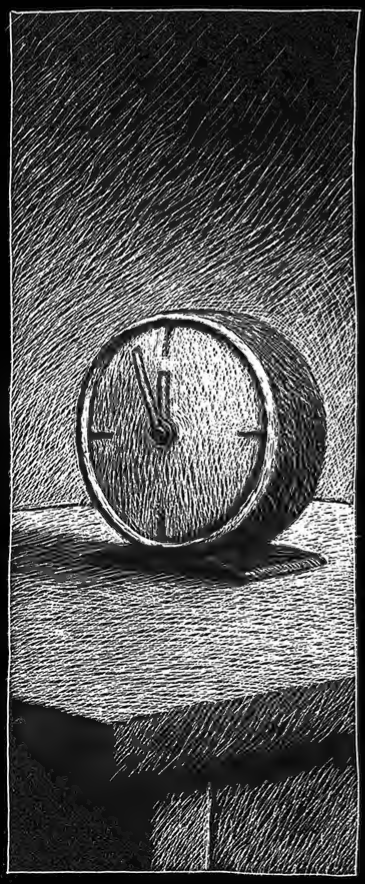
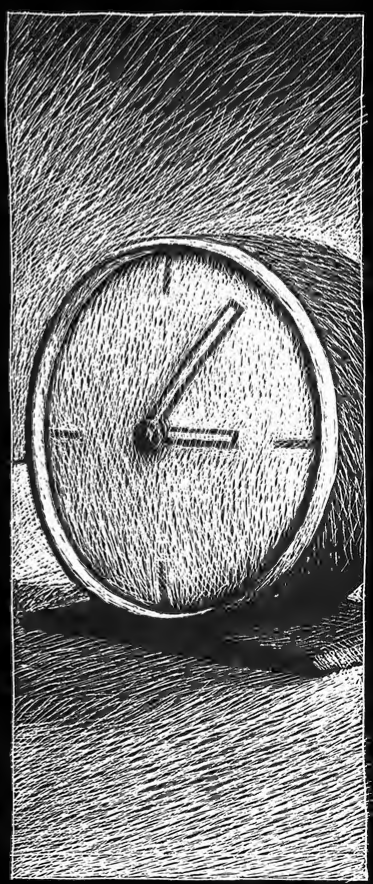
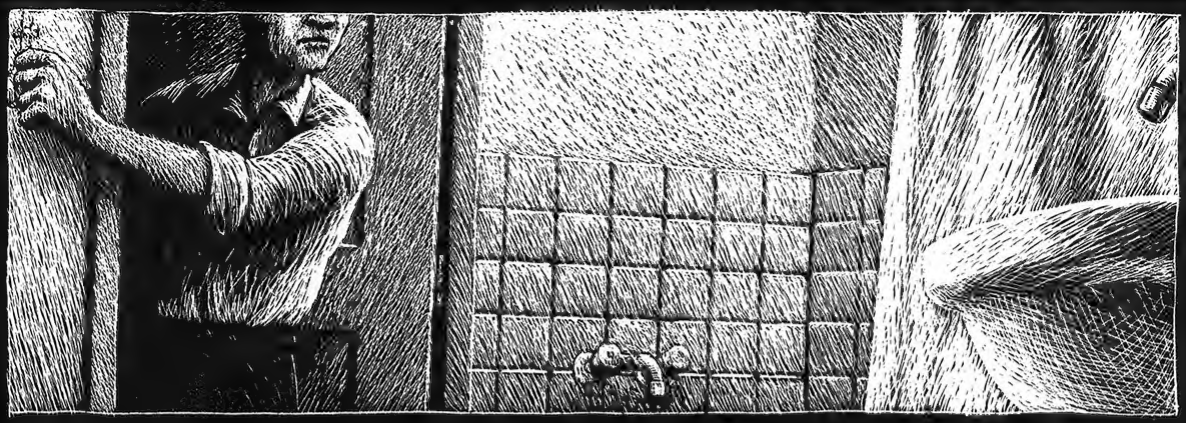
LORON







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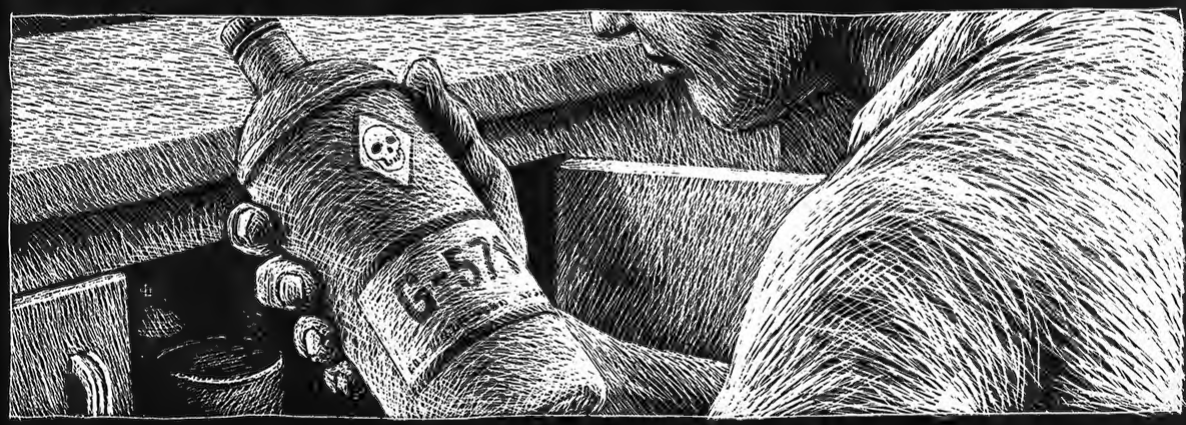
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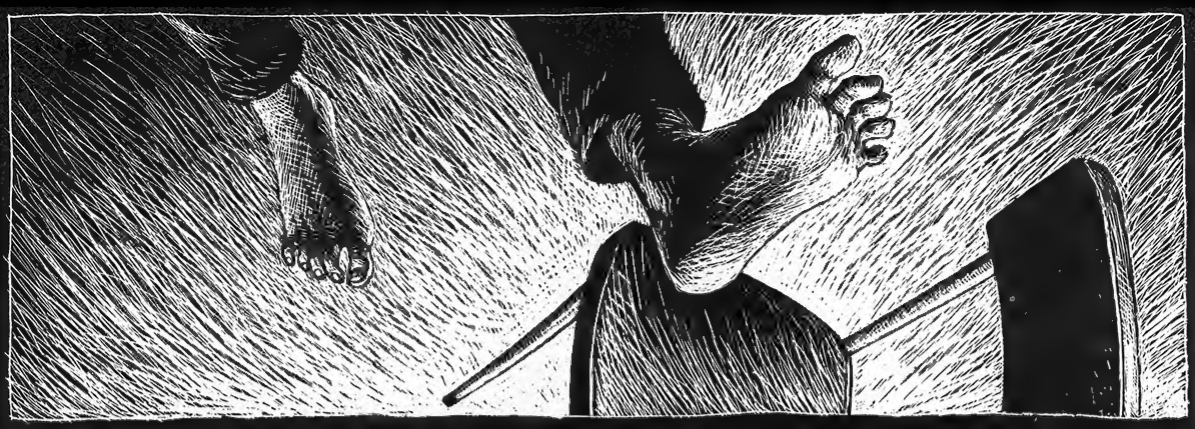
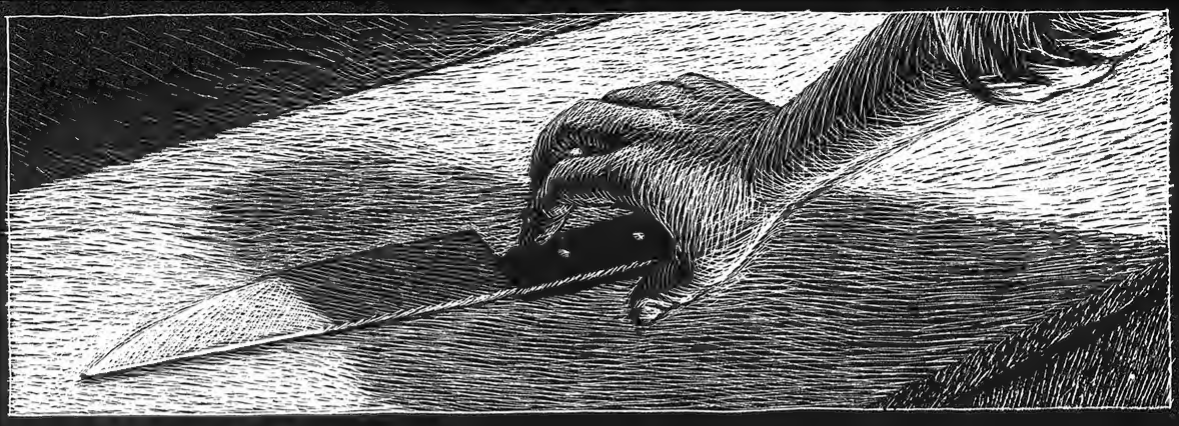
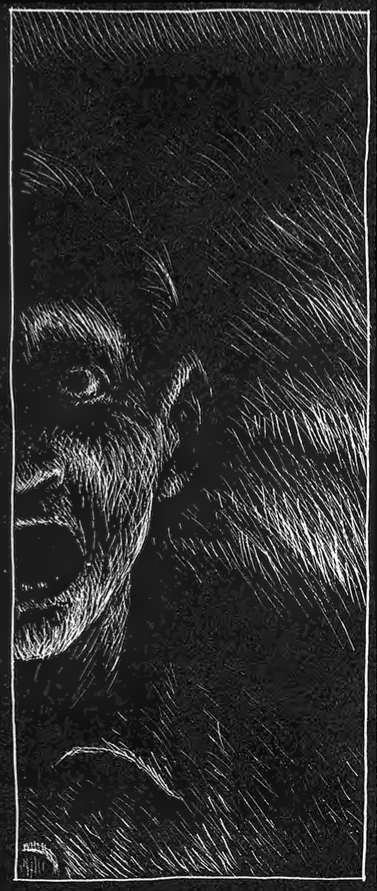
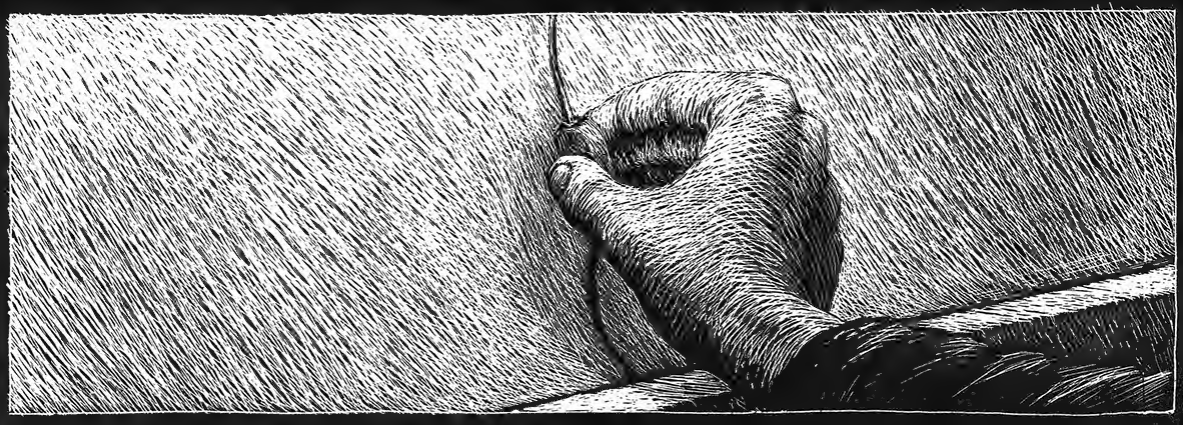








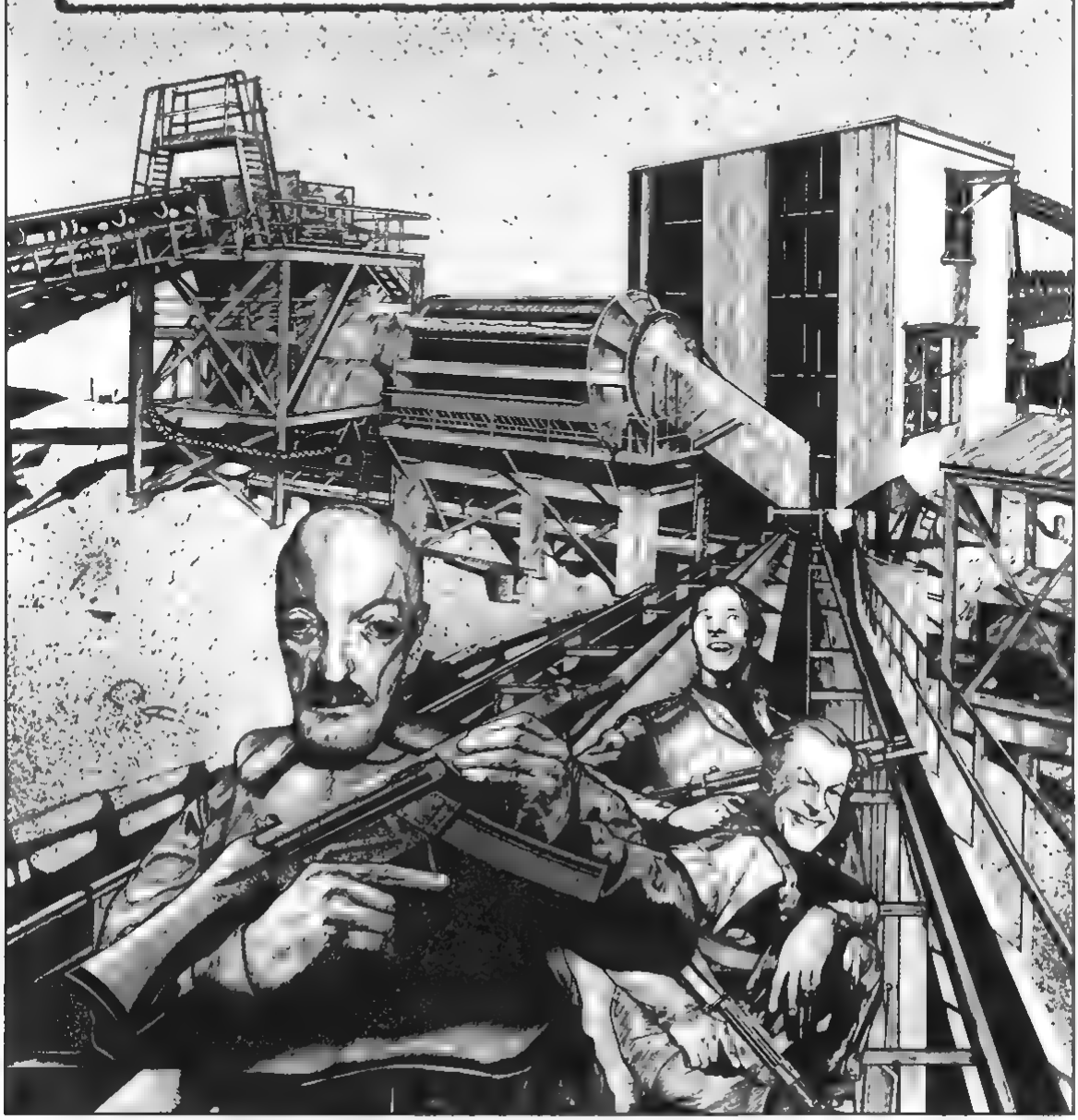
Registry of Death

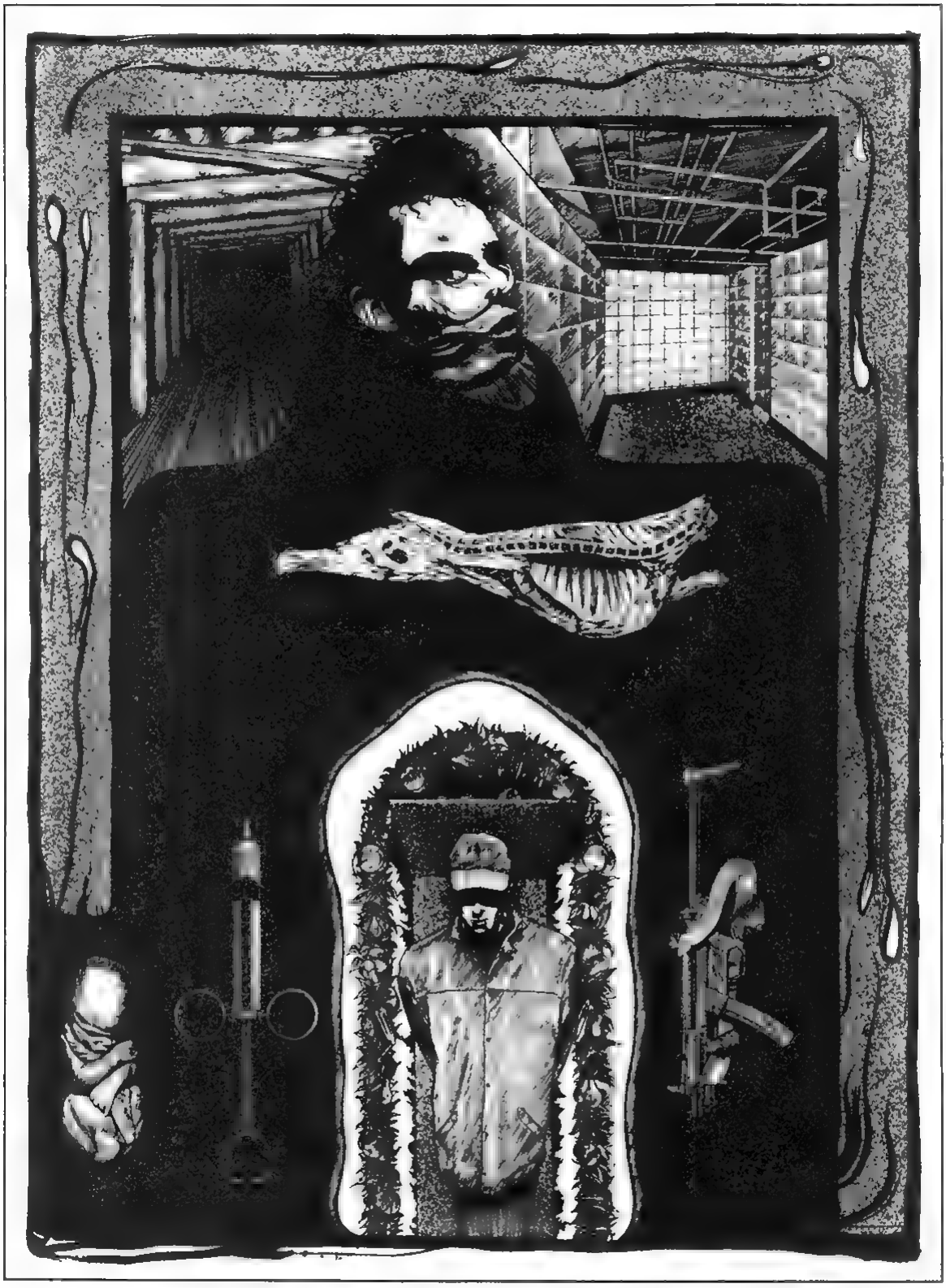
Matthew Coyle and Peter Lamb

Older people still talk of how it used to be before the Registry. The period immediately prior to the Registry was characterized by the worst kind of liberal democratic politics, a place of communists and bleeding hearts.

I am a Registry Elimination Officer. I have worked for the Registry since the age of seventeen. My job is to execute routine warrants for the elimination of illegals–killing for a living.

Or perhaps I should say that I used to work for the Registry. For reasons beyond my comprehension, I now find myself on the other side of the system . . .

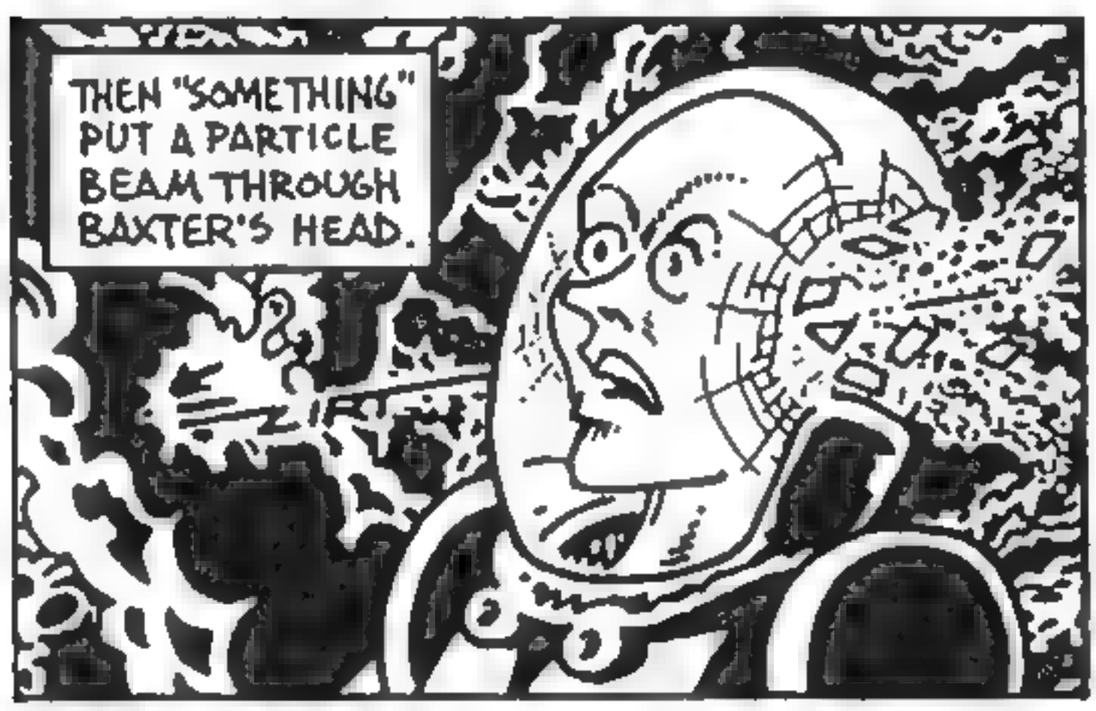


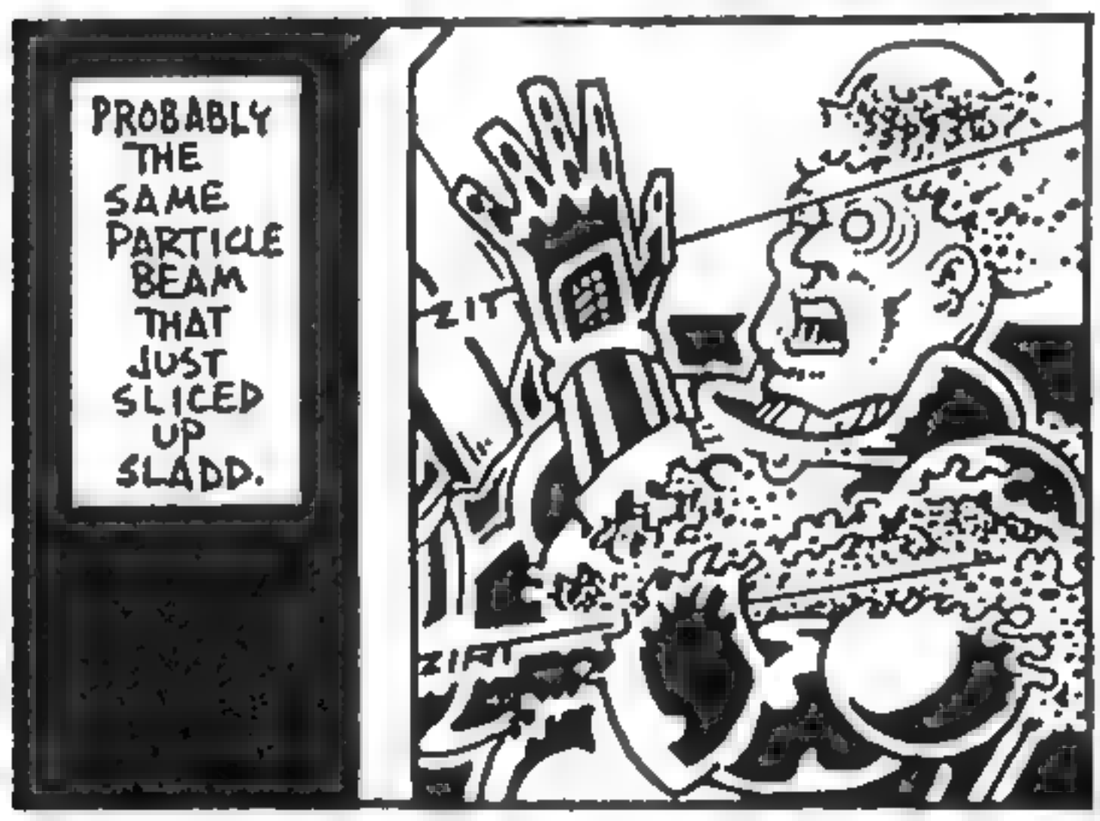


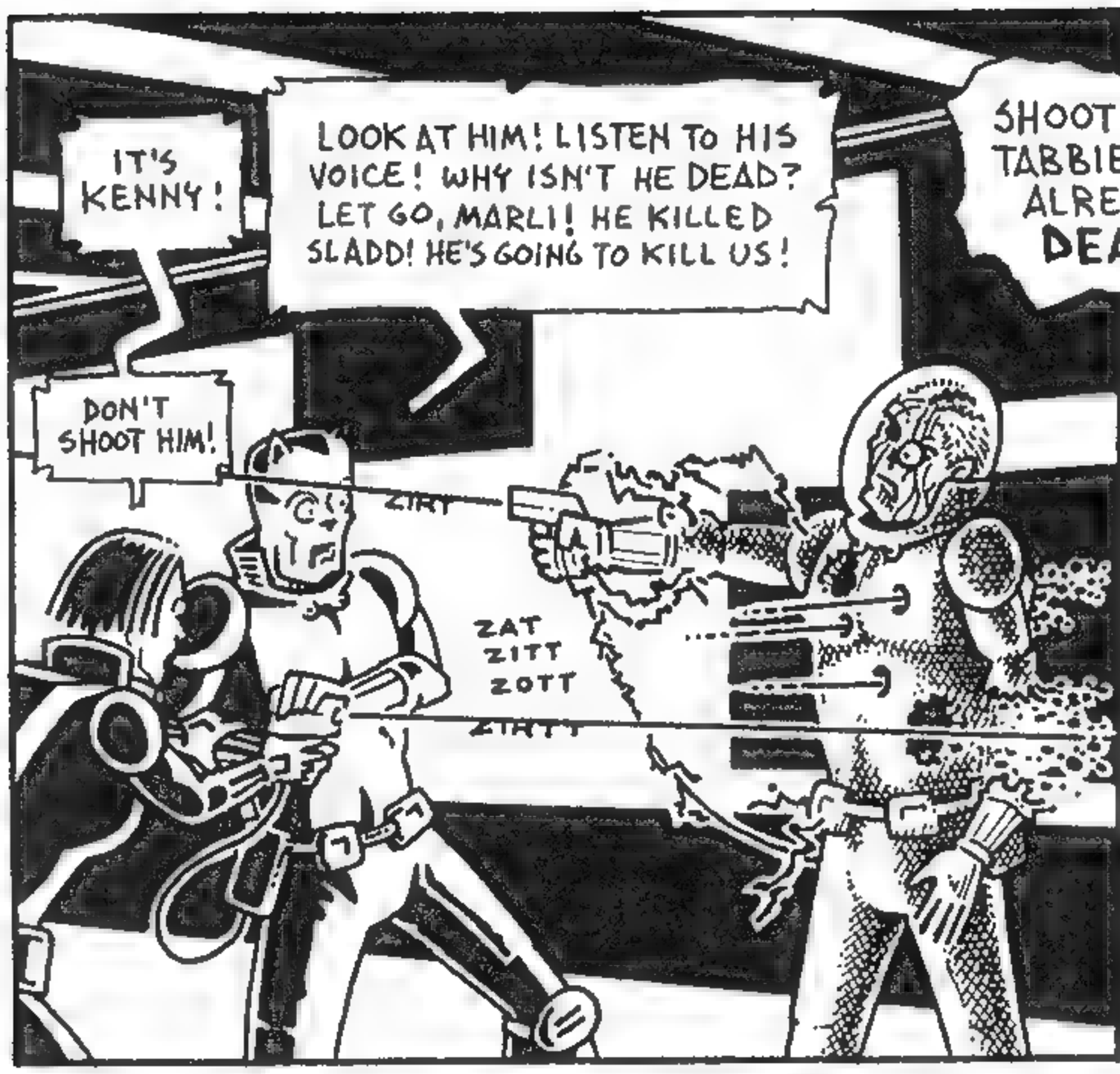
KEZADGERS 2

STORY/ART © MATT HOWARTH

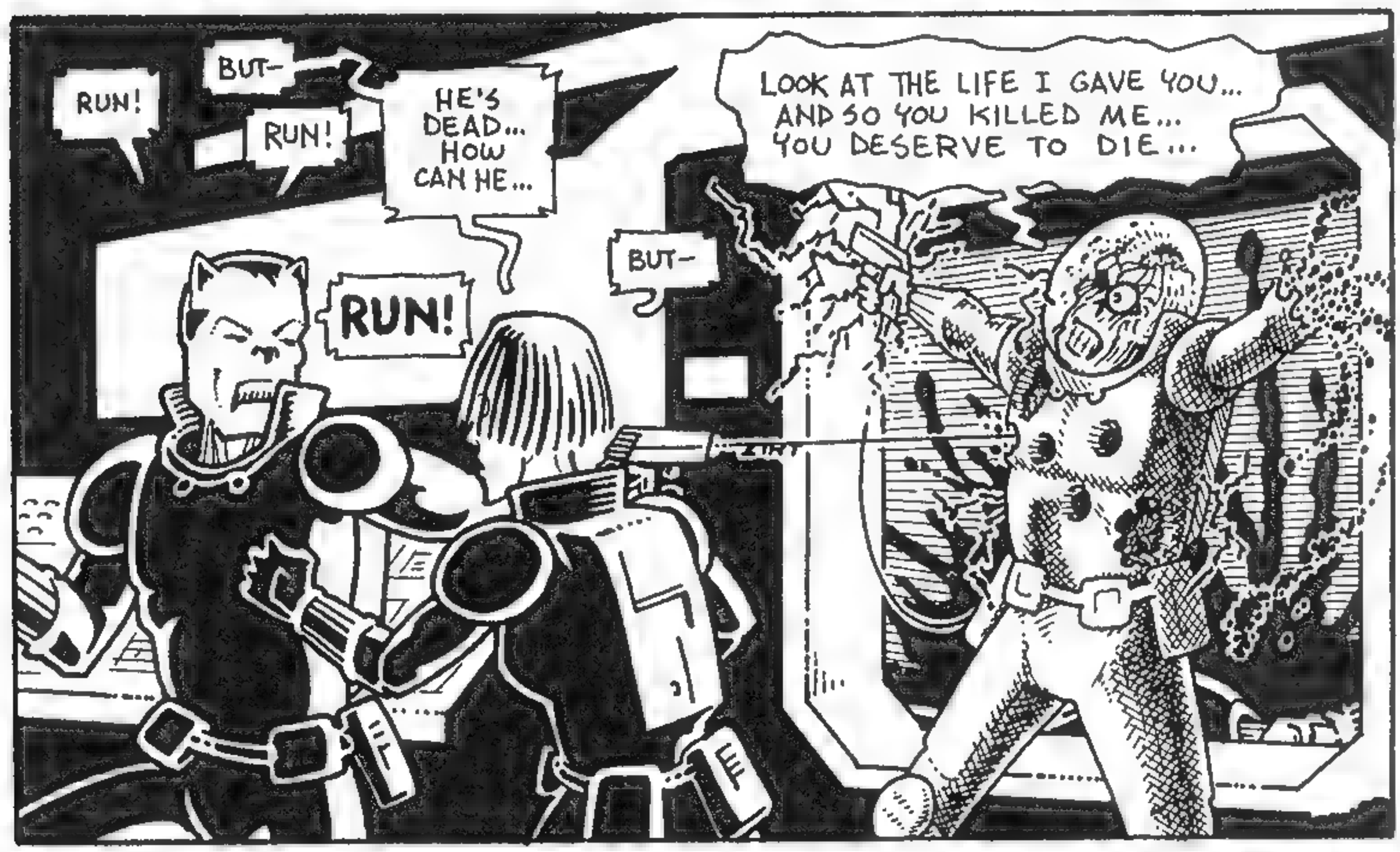
THEY WERE SCAVANGING FOR BURIED ARTIFACTS OF THE PINKWIND VARIETY WHEN THE WEIRDNESS STARTED.



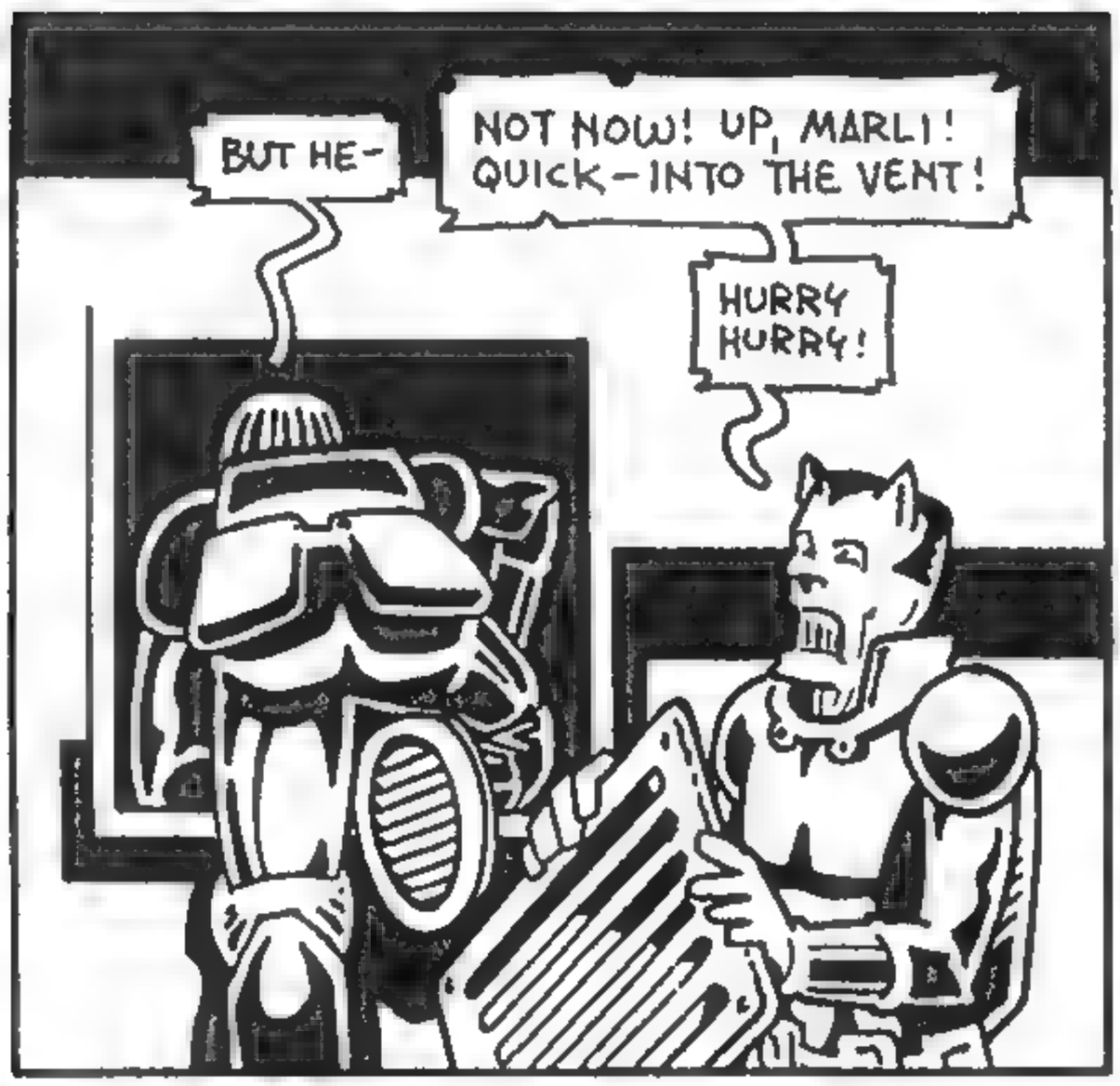



IT'S KENNY!
LOOK AT HIM! LISTEN TO HIS VOICE! WHY ISN'T HE DEAD? LET GO, MARLI! HE KILLED SLADD! HE'S GOING TO KILL US!
DON'T SHOOT HIM!
ZIRT
ZAT ZITT ZOTT
ZIRTT

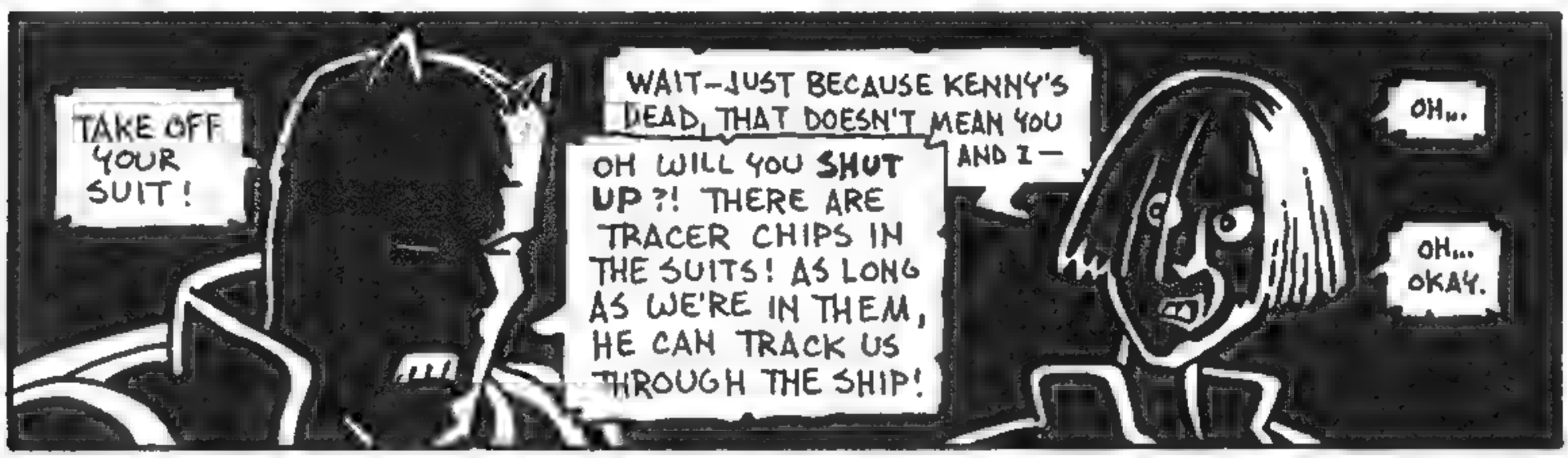
SHOOT AWAY, TABBIE...I'M ALREADY DEAD!


RUN!
BUT-
RUN!
HE'S DEAD... HOW CAN HE...
RUN!
BUT-
LOOK AT THE LIFE I GAVE YOU... AND SO YOU KILLED ME... YOU DESERVE TO DIE...

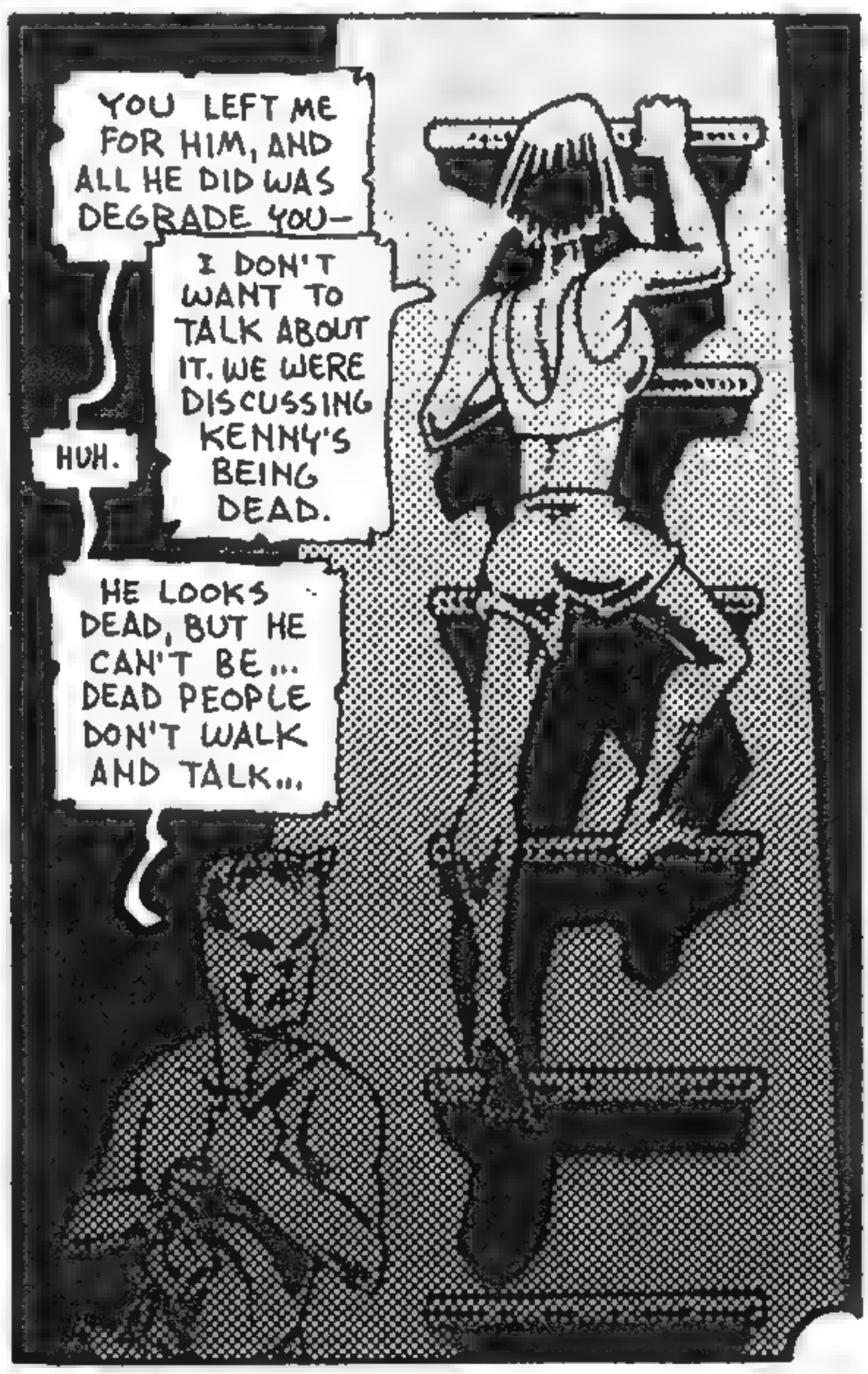
JUST RUN, MARLI!! OR WE'LL BE THE DEAD ONES!
GASP
YOU CAN RUN... BUT YOU'RE STILL GOING TO DIE...


BUT HE-
NOT NOW! UP, MARLI! QUICK-INTO THE VENT!
HURRY HURRY!

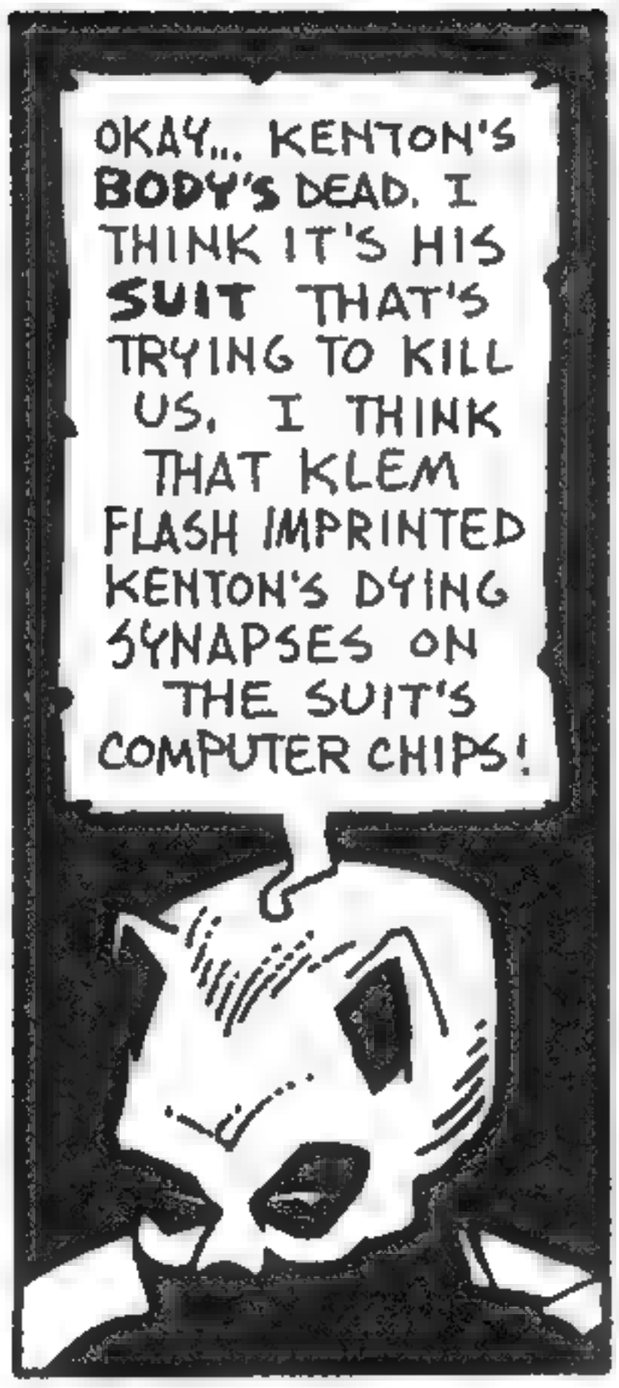
WE'RE IN THE OUTER HULL NOW.


TAKE OFF YOUR SUIT!
WAIT-JUST BECAUSE KENNY'S DEAD, THAT DOESN'T MEAN YOU AND I—
OH WILL YOU SHUT UP?! THERE ARE TRACER CHIPS IN THE SUITS! AS LONG AS WE'RE IN THEM, HE CAN TRACK US THROUGH THE SHIP!
OH...
OH... OKAY.

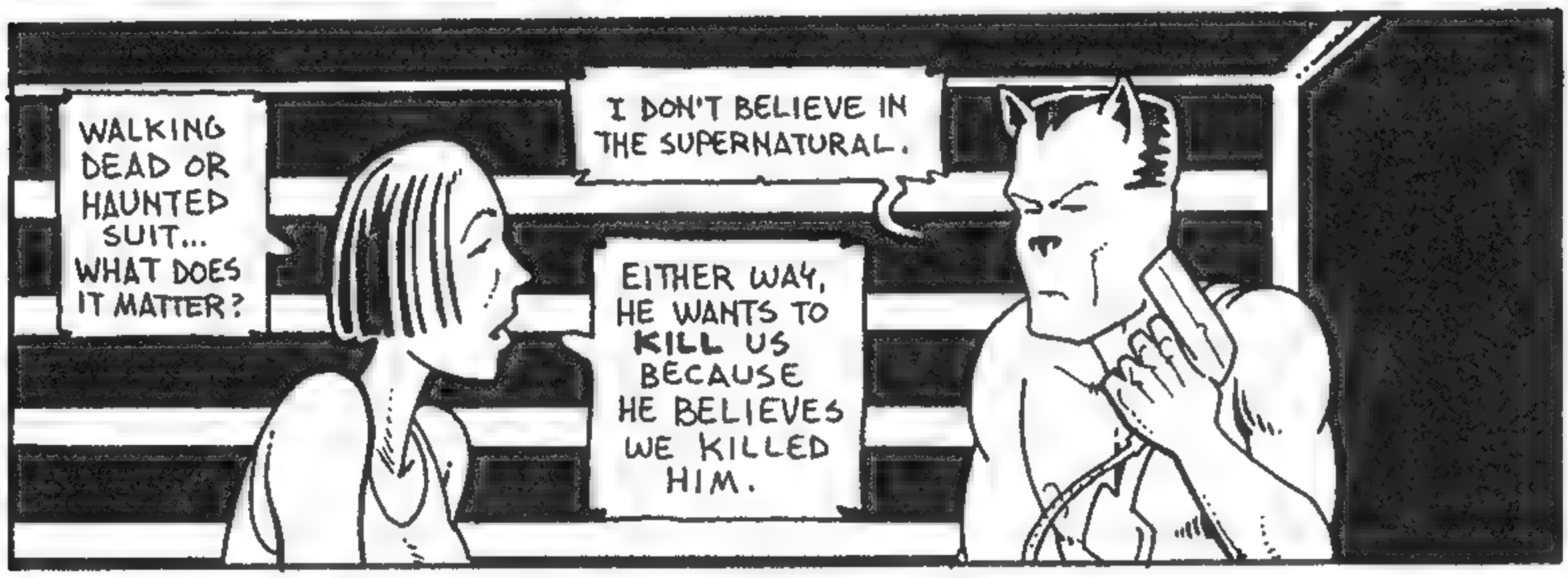
SO...YOU THINK KENTON'S DEAD...?
SWEET ULL-YOU SAW HIM! FULL OF HOLES AND HIS HEAD CRACKED OPEN! HE'S DEAD! BUT NOT EVEN DEATH CAN STOP MY KENNY. HE'S COME BACK FROM THE DEAD TO BE WITH ME.
HE WAS TRYING TO KILL US BOTH, MARLI.
NO! HE LOVES ME!


YOU LEFT ME FOR HIM, AND ALL HE DID WAS DEGRADE YOU-
I DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT. WE WERE DISCUSSING KENNY'S BEING DEAD.
HUH.
HE LOOKS DEAD, BUT HE CAN'T BE... DEAD PEOPLE DON'T WALK AND TALK...

TELL THAT TO THE DEAD KENNY WHO SHOT AT US, TAB!

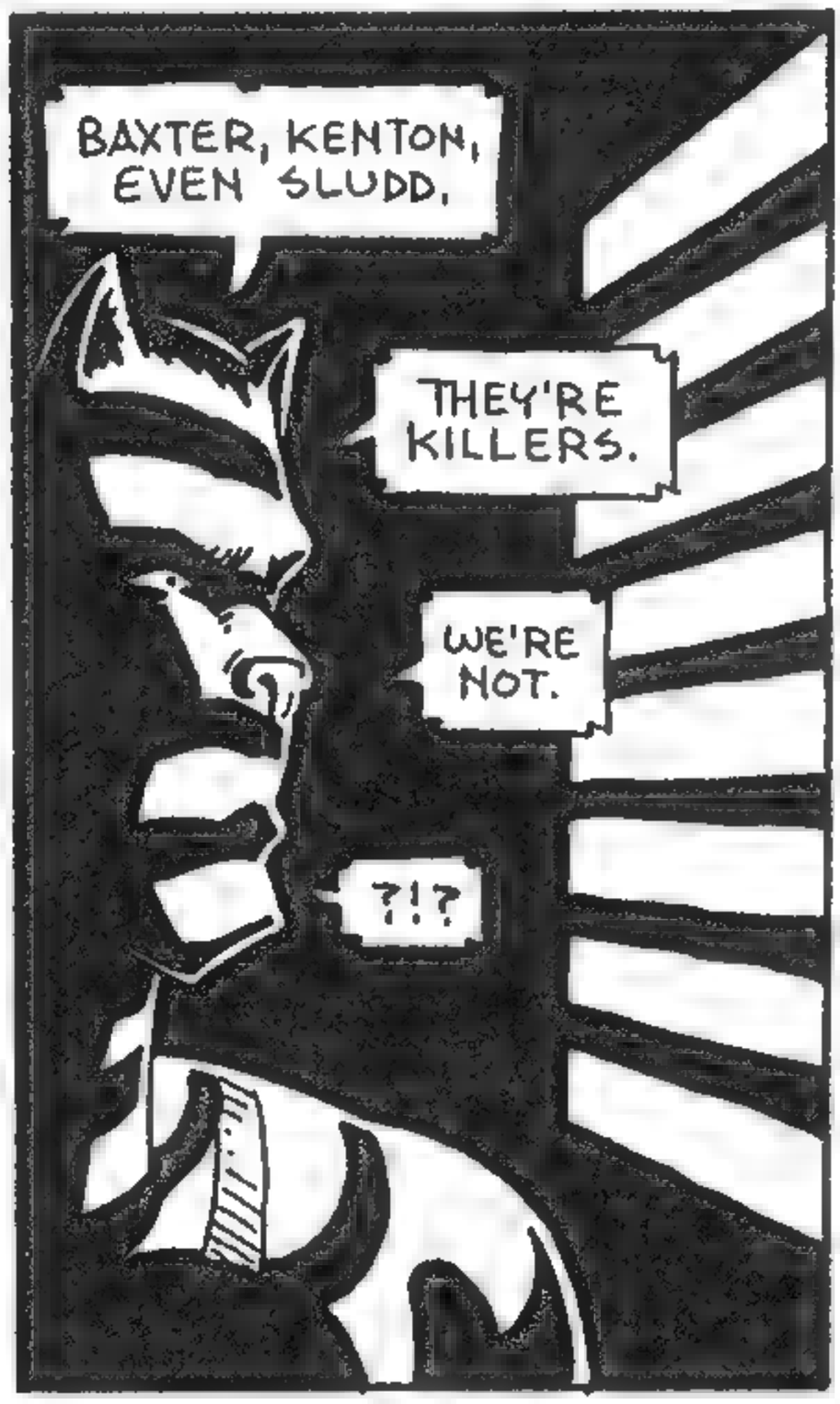

OKAY... KENTON'S **BODY'S** DEAD. I THINK IT'S HIS **SUIT** THAT'S TRYING TO KILL US. I THINK THAT KLEM FLASH IMPRINTED KENTON'S DYING SYNAPSES ON THE SUIT'S COMPUTER CHIPS!

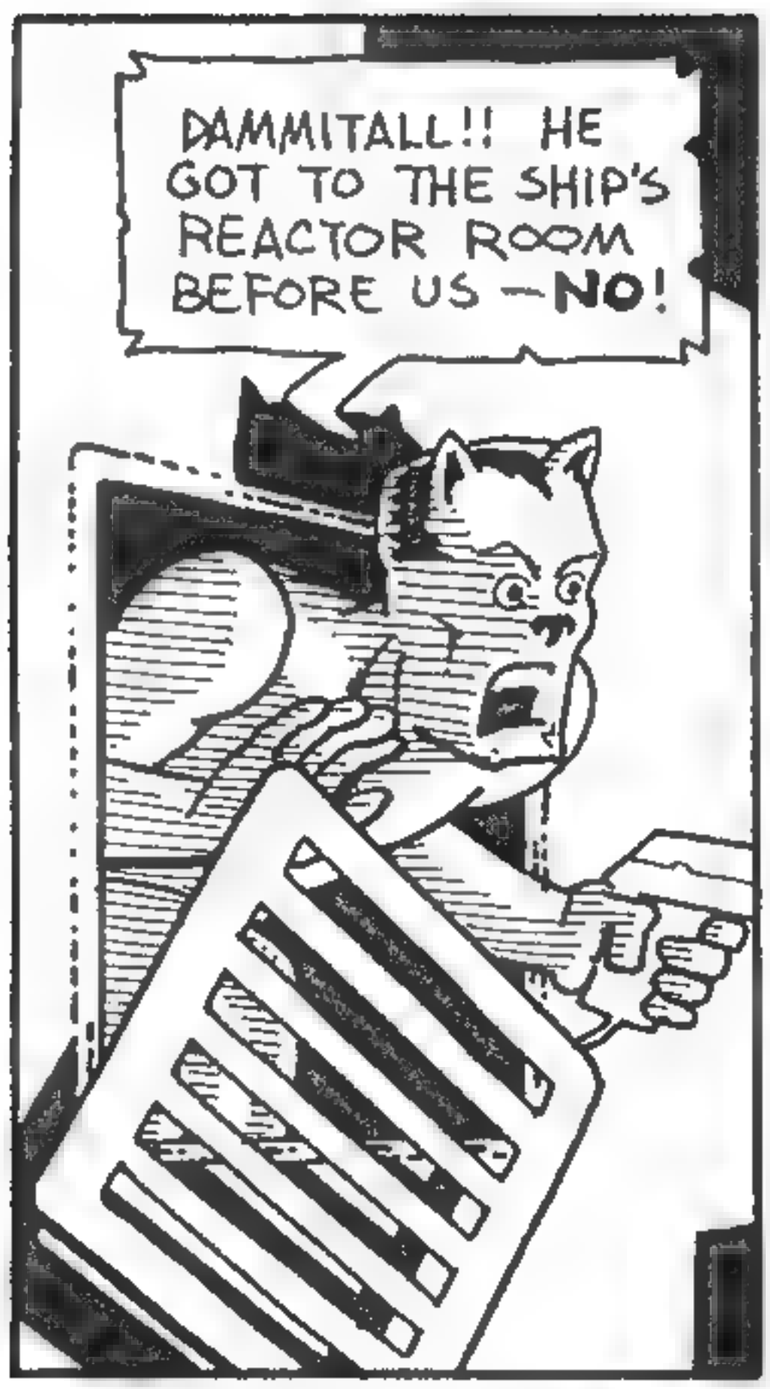
KENTON DIDN'T REANIMATE HIS CORPSE — HIS MIND IS TRAPPED IN THE SPACE SUIT THE CORPSE IS WEARING!
YOU MEAN THE SUIT IS HAUNTED...
WELL, NO...

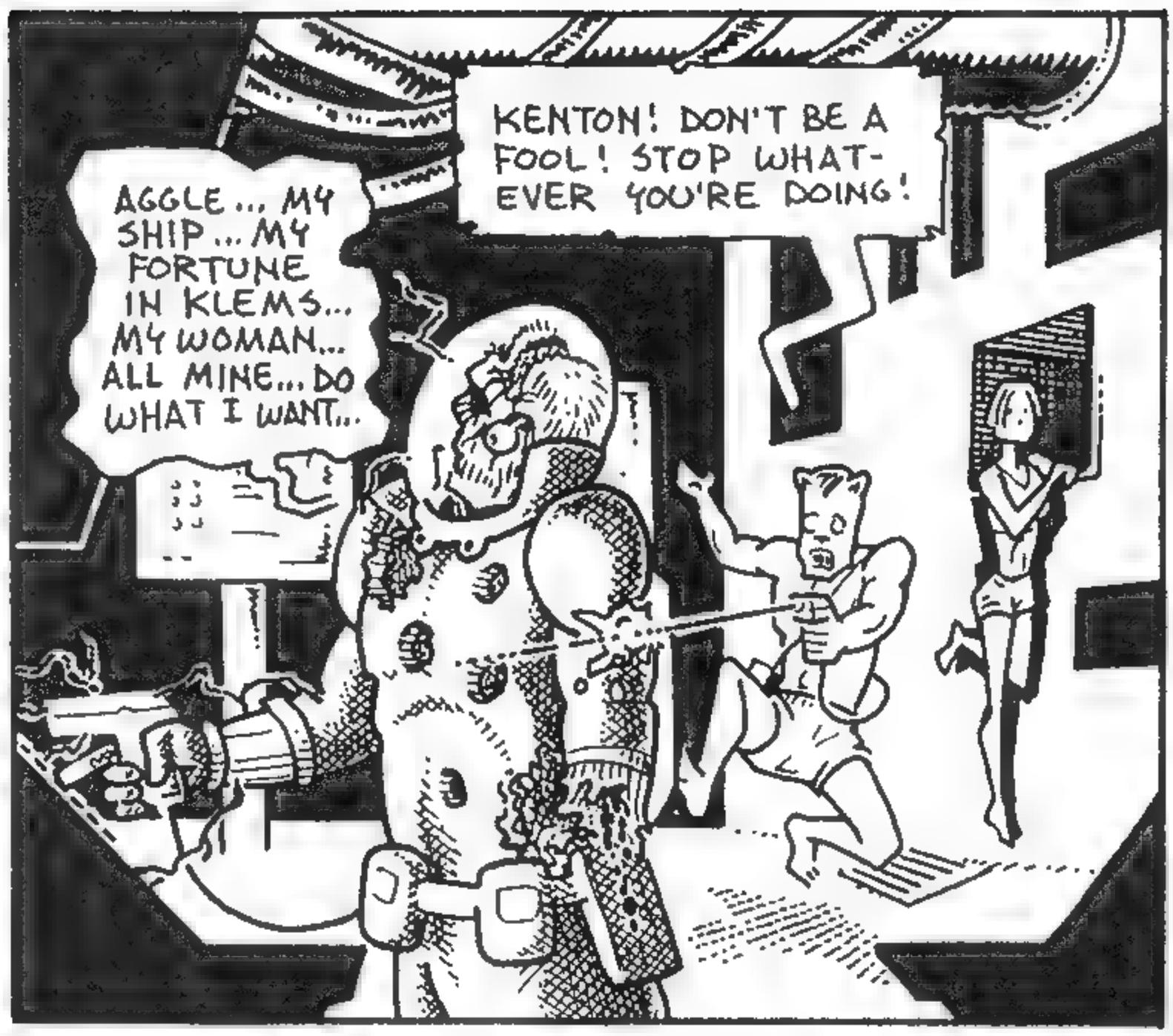

WALKING DEAD OR HAUNTED SUIT... WHAT DOES IT MATTER?
I DON'T BELIEVE IN THE SUPERNATURAL.
EITHER WAY, HE WANTS TO **KILL** US BECAUSE HE BELIEVES WE KILLED HIM.

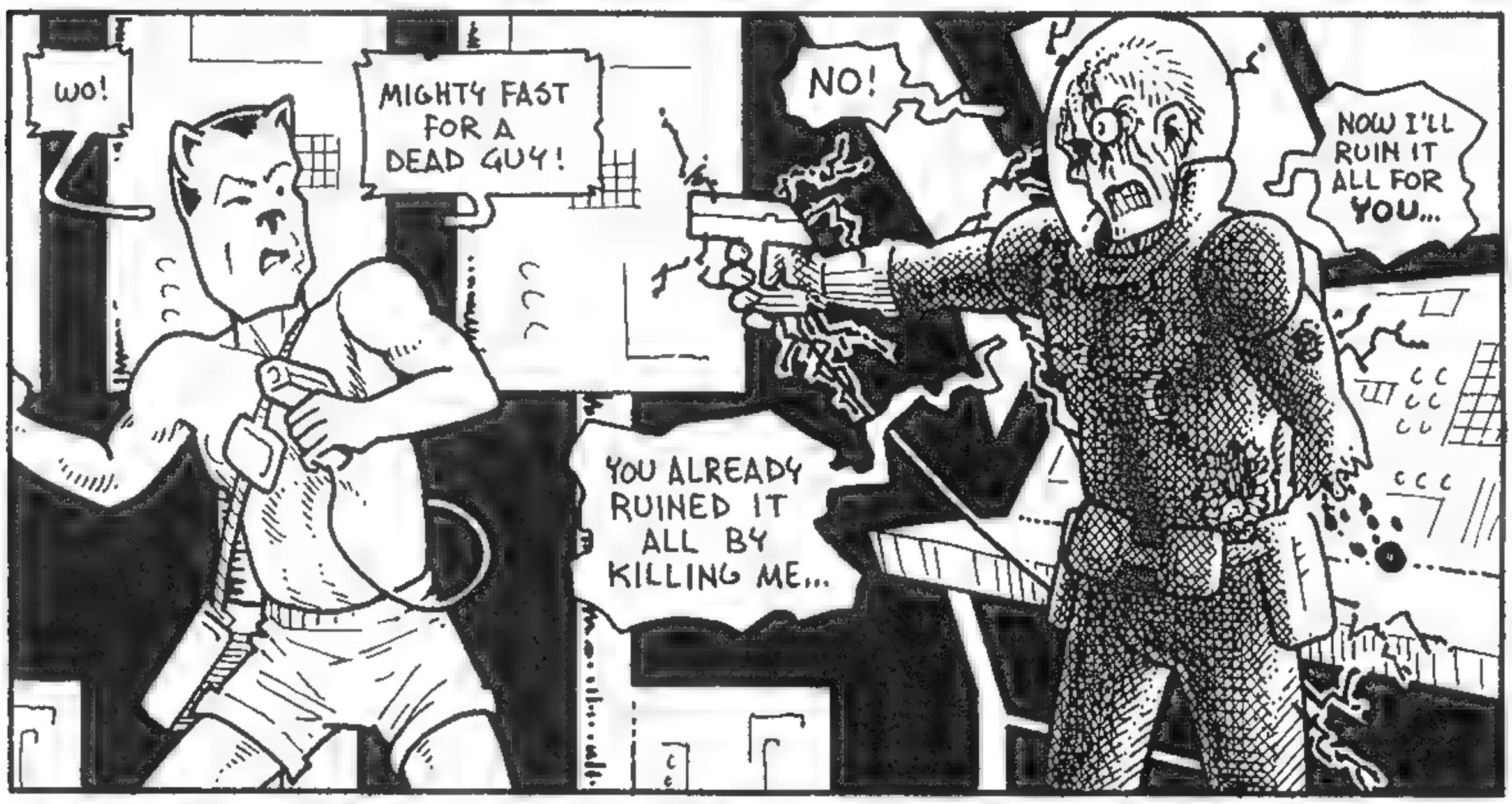
YEAH, WELL, **I** DIDN'T KILL HIM.
DID YOU?

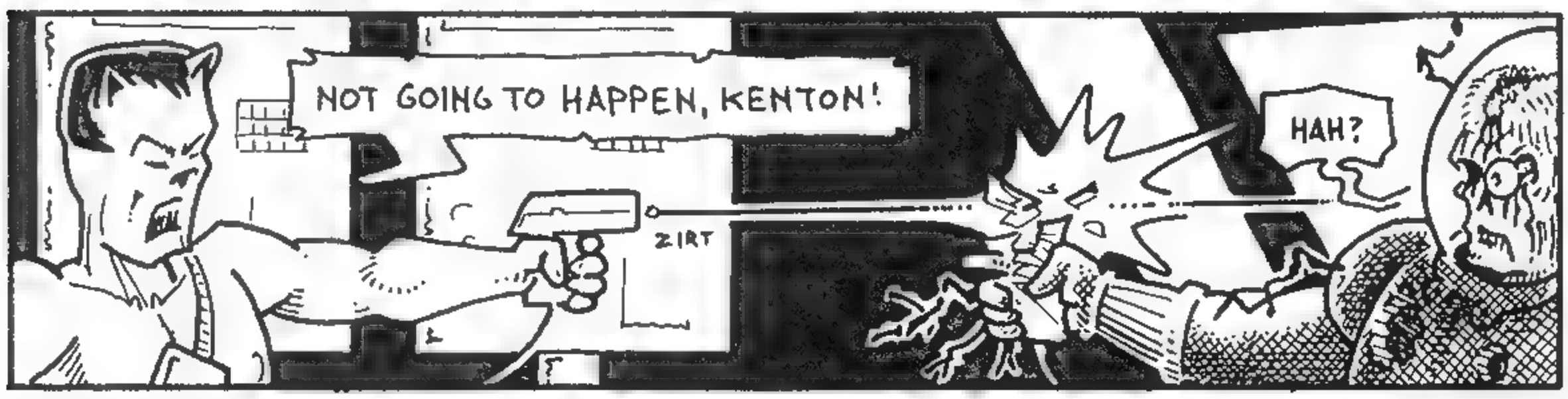
WHAT? YOU ARROGANT CREEP! OF COURSE NOT—WHY WOULD YOU EVEN
IT'S A SMALL SHIP, MARLI. IT WAS NO SECRET HOW HE MISTREATED YOU.
HE **LOVED** ME!
ANYWAY, I THINK IT WAS BAXTER. HE HAD A BACKGROUND IN ILLEGAL MICROWAVE CLOUD-MINING. HE COULD'VE RIGGED THAT KLEM TO GO OFF LIKE IT DID.


BAXTER, KENTON, EVEN SLUDD.
THEY'RE KILLERS.
WE'RE NOT.
?!?

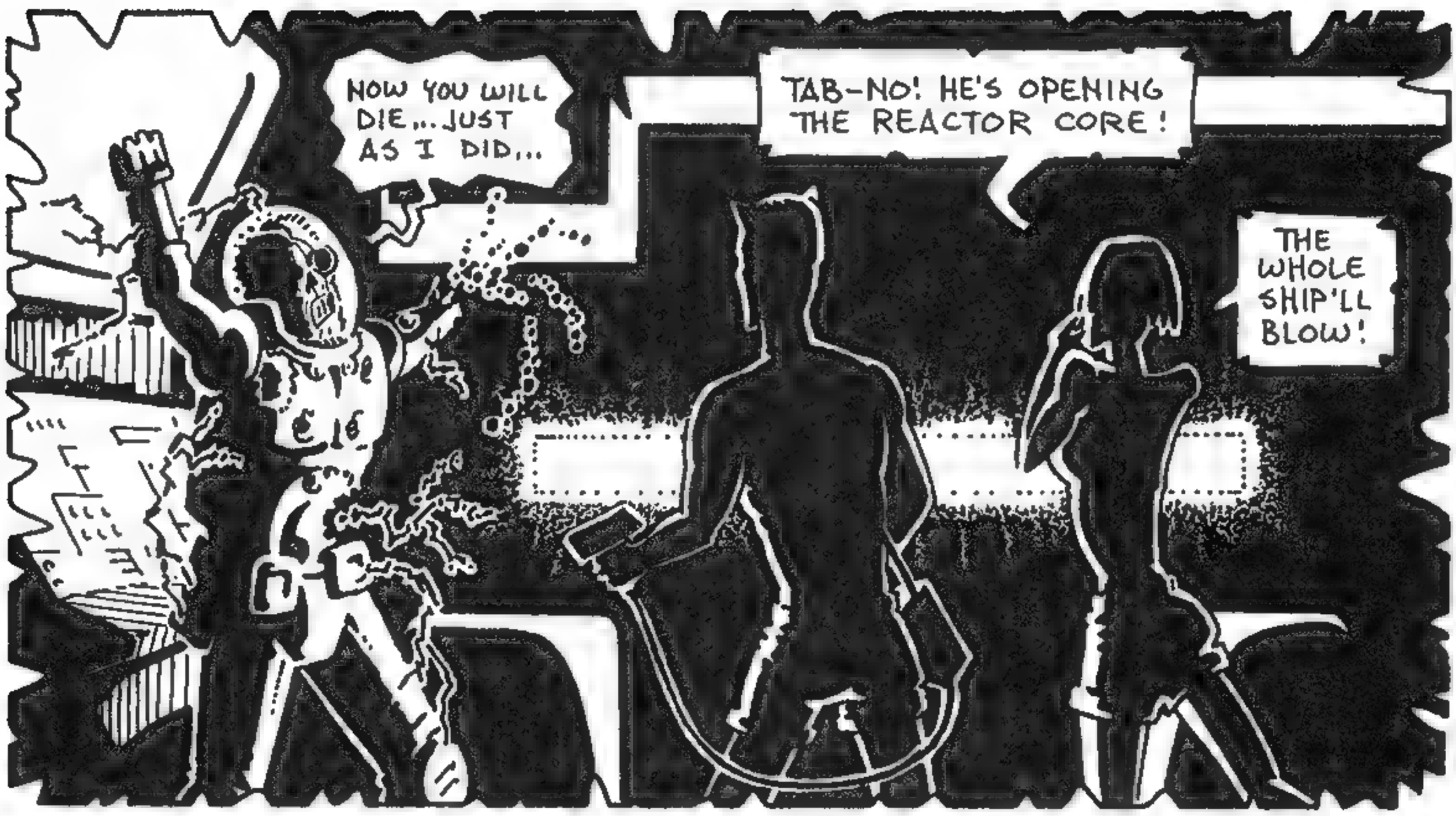

DAMMITALL!! HE GOT TO THE SHIP'S REACTOR ROOM BEFORE US —NO!


AGGLE... MY SHIP... MY FORTUNE IN KLEMS... MY WOMAN... ALL MINE... DO WHAT I WANT...
KENTON! DON'T BE A FOOL! STOP WHATEVER YOU'RE DOING!


WO!
MIGHTY FAST FOR A DEAD GUY!
NO!
NOW I'LL RUIN IT ALL FOR YOU...
YOU ALREADY RUINED IT ALL BY KILLING ME...

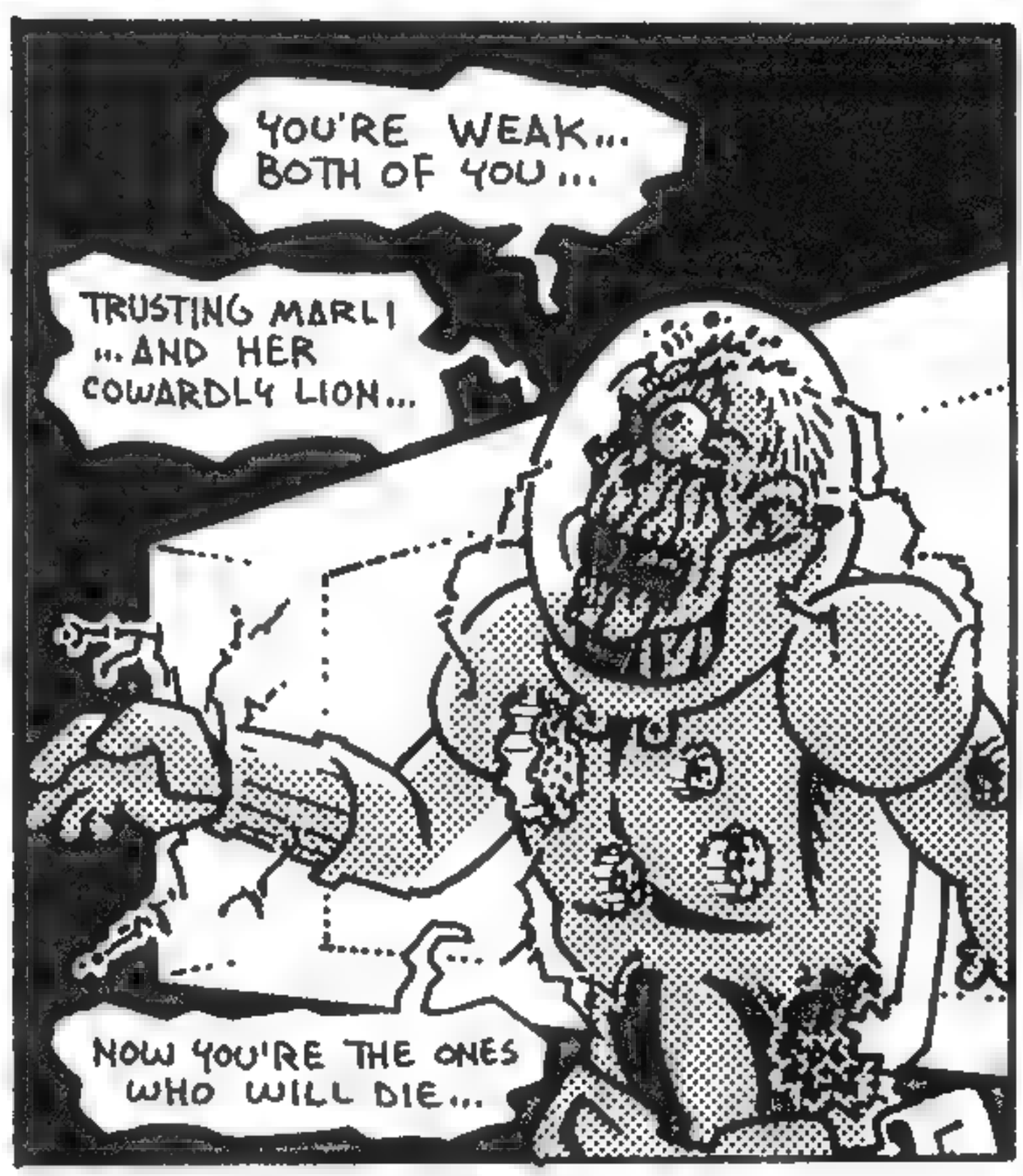

NOT GOING TO HAPPEN, KENTON!
ZIRT
HAH?

OH NO—
HUH—?


NOW YOU WILL DIE... JUST AS I DID...
TAB-NO! HE'S OPENING THE REACTOR CORE!
THE WHOLE SHIP'LL BLOW!

NO, KENTON! THAT'S WHERE YOU'RE WRONG! IF WE DIE, IT WON'T BE LIKE YOU!
WE'LL DIE WITH DIGNITY AND A CHANCE FOR REDEMPTION! YOU- YOU DESERVED TO DIE! YOU WERE AN EVIL USER AND I WISH I HAD BEEN THE ONE WHO KILLED YOU!
NO - YOU'RE THE ONE WHO DESERVES TO DIE!

IT'S PROGRAMMED FOR FULL RELEASE! OH, KENNY - HOW COULD YOU?!?
I MIGHT BE ABLE TO SLOW IT DOWN, BUT WITHOUT KENNY'S IDENT, THERE'S NO WAY TO STOP THE COMMAND!


YOU'RE WEAK... BOTH OF YOU...
TRUSTING MARLI ...AND HER COWARDLY LION...
NOW YOU'RE THE ONES WHO WILL DIE...

MAYBE SO—

BUT YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S GOING TO BURN FIRST!

WHAT...

NOOOO.....

METAL SIZZLE

NO! YOU PUSHED THE MAN I LOVED INTO THE REACTOR! YOU KILLED HIM! YOU SAID YOU WEREN'T A MURDERER, BUT YOU KILLED HIM! AND US TOO! NOW THERE'S NO WAY TO CLOSE THE CORE!

THE KLEM FLASH KILLED KENTON. ALL I PUSHED INTO THE REACTOR WAS A CORPSE IN A SPACESUIT.

WE'RE STILL GOING TO DIE!

I SUPPOSE THIS IS WHAT I DESERVE FOR LETTING HIM MANHANDLE ME THE WAY HE DID...

WAIT!

WE MIGHT STILL HAVE A CHANCE!

BACK HERE IN THE CONTROL ROOM WHERE WE FACED IT THAT FIRST TIME.
WHERE IS IT?
UMM
AHA!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING? ICK! IS THAT AN ARM YOU HAVE THERE?
KENTON'S ARM! THE ONE I SHOT OFF!

HIS HAND-PRINT! IT SHOULD AUTHORIZE A COMMAND CHANGE!

HURRY! KEY IN THE COMMAND TO CLOSE THE REACTOR, MARLI!
THIS BETTER WORK, TAB.
THERE...

IT WORKED! THE CORE IS CLOSING!

WE BEAT HIM! SEE? NOW THAT THE SUIT IS DESTROYED, HIS HAND IS REALLY DEAD.
OH, TAB! YOU WERE SO BRAVE!
THROW AWAY THAT AWFUL HAND—
17

THROW IT AWAY? DON'T BE CRAZY! WE HAVE TO FIND SOME WAY TO PRESERVE IT! ...REFRIGERATION MAYBE... WITHOUT IT, WE'LL NEVER GET THE SHIP TO TAKE US HOME...
OH—ICK!
GROSS!
GROSS? KENTON IS DEAD AND HE STILL RUNS THE SHIP! THAT'S GROSS!

DR. WROTWANG'S WRATZWERKS

CREATED, WRITTEN AND DRAWN BY TOM SUTTON © 1990

THE TAIL CONTINUES...

GOOOD WRATZ ...YAZZZ... ...SNORK SLEEEP...

WRATZ GOOOD, NOT BHAAAD!!

NO! KAF!

HOO-MANS HAVE NO TAIL, WRATZ.

SSHNAR?

YES.

WW II K RATION

GO WAY!

HMPH... WHOOOZ YOOOZ OL' WRATZ? SSZZNORK

IDENTITY CRISIS, WRATZ?

...YAZZZ...

WHOZZAT?

SHIT!

WROTWANG?

FLUSHED DOWN THE TOILET WHEN THE LAB BLEW!

DEAD?

DOGS FRENZY

TWO DIVISIO NATIONAL GUA

EATEN

CITY ZOO HORROR SCENE

NEVER BETTER! NOTHING DIES ANYMORE, WRATZ. MINDPOOL CHANGED ALL THAT. AS FOR ME IT WAS DOWN TO THE SEA IN SHITS! HA! THE OCEAN, WRATZ! ALL THE PHYSIOCHEMICAL PROPERTIES NECESSARY TO LIFE. ANY KIND OF LIFE!

ALL MINE!

TERROR IN SUBWAYS ANIMALS SAVAGE TRAINS.

YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE THE NEW FRIENDS I'M MAKING!

REINFORCE-MENTS?

GETTING SMARTER, OL' THING? AIN'T SCIENCE WONDERFUL!

SEE YOU IN YOUR DREAMS. GOTTA CATCH THE EXPRESS CURRENT...

...TO THE TRENCH!

BAM! OW! OH!
POUND! UMPH!
OUCH!
HEY! WRATZ!
WHA?

WHAT WANT WRATZ? CRAZED CATS? MAD MONKEYS? PSYCHO SLOTHS?
WRATZ! LET ME IN! IT'S ME, SAM!
YOWCH!

GRUMBLE, WHAT'S SHE WANT?
WRATZ NOT ORDER DRINKS TO GO.

HELP!
TELL THEM I'M ON YOUR SIDE, UH... I MEAN THEIR SIDE.
OW!

SIGH GET OFF HER AND GO EAT THE MAYOR!

SAM A MESS.
WROTWANG? THAT CRAZY FUCK? HE'S DEAD... ISN'T HE?
SAM MAKE NEW FRIENDS LIKE WROTWANG DOES?
HIS HEAD IS HEADING OUT TO SEA...
BUT... WHAT DO I KNOW?
I'M A RAT.

SAM, WHAT IS "TRENCH" IN OCEAN?
WELL, THERE'S THE **ATLANTIC TRENCH**... UH, A BIG HOLE IN THE SEA BED.
BUT NOBODY KNOWS WHAT'S DOWN THERE.
WROTWANG DOES, HE **KNOWS** SAM.

OH YEAH? **HOW** DOES HE KNOW?
SAM READ WROTWANG'S NOTE BOOKS?
READ ABOUT '**NECRONOMICON**'?
OL' WROT WAS A GENIUS NUT, NECRONOMICON WAS A FICTION MADE UP BY H.P. LOVECRAFT, A PULP HORROR WRITER ABOUT SIXTY YEARS AGO.

AND **DR. SAX**? MORE FICTION?

A CHARACTER CREATED BY JACK KEROUAC, MORE FICTION.
HOO-MAAN ONCE SAID, HOW OFTEN LIFE IMITATES FICTION!
I'S A **LITERARY** RAT.
UH, HUH.

YOU AREN'T THE OL' RAT CATCHER ANYMORE, ARE YOU WRATZ. **SHNAR** SAID YOU WERE TO HELP THE MUTANT ANIMALS.
AND THEY DO OBEY YOU.

I AM CHANGING, SAM. SOMETHING IS **REBUILDING** WRATZ FROM THE INSIDE OUT. THERE ARE **WHISPERS** IN WRATZ' HEAD, REMEMBERING BITS, NOT ENOUGH YET.

AM NOT **RAT**-MAN, NOT **MAN**-RAT. AM... AM ONE WITH SHNAR. I WILL HELP THEM... SOMEHOW.
YOU TOO, MAYBE.

YOU'RE SOMETHING ELSE WRATZ, YOU COULD USE A COUPLE SHOWERS BUT WHAT THE HELL. THAT **TAIL** IS AWESOME.
SO IS YOURS, SAM.

K-K-KRAAK! KDU
WHY IS THE WALL MOVING?
MORE VISITORS, VERY **LARGE** VISITORS!

MIND POOL CALLS!
UNION WITH BROTHER WRATZ!
JOIN AS ONE WITH US. TUBE TO FEED LINE UNITED BIO UNITS! DOCTOR'S ORDERS.
WHAT WROTWANG HATH JOINED TOGETHER LET NOTHING RENDER ASUNDER!
RESPONSIBLE YOU ARE WRATZ!
CHOOSE! EITHER BROTHER YOU ARE, OR FOOD!
WRATZ ALL INSIDE-OUTSIDE, NOT LIKE YOU, NOT HOO-MAN-MOSTLY NOT GOOD TO EAT!
WROTWANG'S LAB TEST ANIMALS! THEY MUST'VE SPREAD ALL ACROSS THE CITY WHEN THE LAB BLEW!

WRATZ IS MAJORITY OF ONE. NO JOINING!

THEN WE END YOUR ONE-NESS. DEVIATE!

YO! HEY!

WE FREED YOU FROM WROTWANG, FROM THAT DAMNED LABORATORY, AND YOU'RE GONNA KILL US!?

NOT KILL. THIS UNIT WILL ABSORB, INGEST AND MAKE YOU A PART OF THE ALL-ONE. TO GROW FOREVER MUTATING.. NEVER DIE!

NEVER DIE.

NEVER DIE! NEVER NEVER

SSSKREEE WHOOM

RIGHT! NEVER DIE!

KILL ANYTHING THAT MOVES!

COUGH'--:KAF: HURRY SAM. DOWN FLOOR DOOR. WRATZ DON'T LIVE HERE NO MORE.
UMMPH!

I AM NOT, NOT CRYING... :SOB: I DON'T CARE... THEY WERE NORMAL ANIMALS. WHY DID THE BASTARDS BLOW THEM AWAY LIKE THAT?
THAT'S WHAT THEY DO. THEY'RE HOO-MAANS.

NOT TO CRY, SAM. THEY JUST CHANGE SOME MORE.
MUTATIONS JUST MUTATE... UH INTO SOMETHING ELSE. BIG BOOM PISS THEM OFF, THOUGH.
UNGH! SAM HEAVY.

HEY! I'M A HUMAN YOU WRETCHED RODENT!
UNFORTUNATELY ONLY HALF RODENT. ALSO, I AM THE ONE ON TWO FEET WITH A PLAN.
PLAN? WHAT PLAN?

SO WHAT'S THE PLAN?
HURRY TO MEET MO-RI-ARTI, DR. SAX AND MISTER KER-O-WAX. THEN ON TO PROVIDENCE AND MR. LOVECRAFT.

GREAT PLAN. GETTING TWO DEAD GUYS TO TAKE US TO A THIRD DEAD GUY.
YOU THINK IT UP ALL BY YOURSELF?
NO.
SAM NOT LOOK DOWN.

SO WHAT DO YOU NEED ME FOR?
KEEP AWAY FROM THE WALLS, SAM.

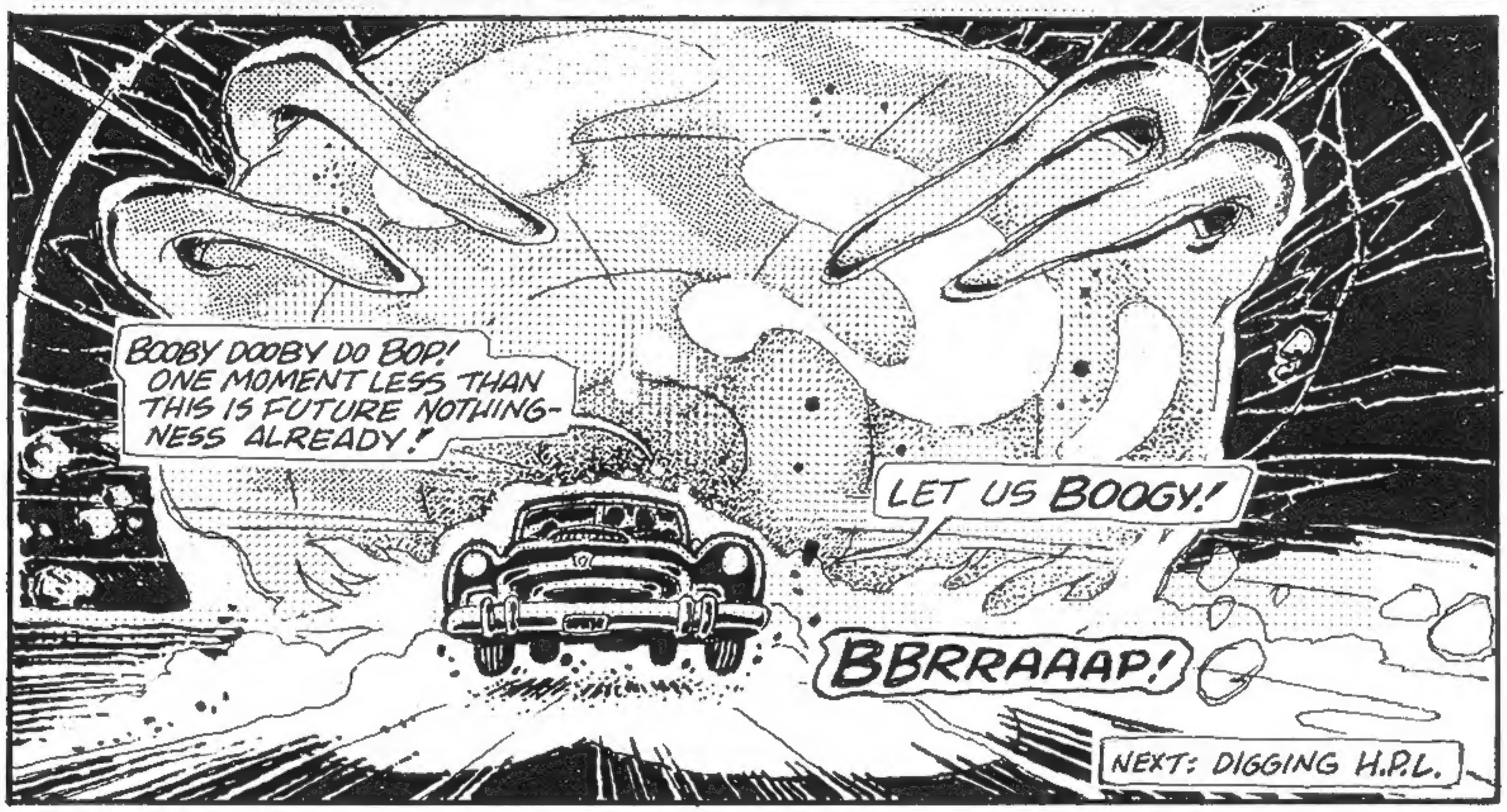
I DON'T NEED YOU, SAM. MAYBE I JUST HELP YOU A LITTLE, OKAY?

THIS IS WHERE YOU EXPECT A CAR TO PICK US UP? THIS IS SOME PREHISTORIC SUBWAY TO HELL!
VVVRROOMMM VVOOOMM
SOMETHING IS WRONG! HE'S COMING IN TOO FAST!
VVOOOOOC
SAM PLEASE BE POLITE NOW. AND ... UH ... SHUT UP.
VVVRROOMM

BEE-BOP-A-BOO-DO! IN! IN THE CAR NOW! THIS CAT IS EVEN NOW MOTO-VATING OUT!
IT'S HIM.

UP FRONT WITH WRATZ AND ME. BACK SEATS TAKEN.
BUT THERE'S NOBODY...
HE'S RIGHT SAM.

BACK SEAT FOR DR. SAX.
YOU WOULDN'T LIKE IT BACK THERE, SAM, I'M DEAN MORIAR-TI, AIN'T THIS FUN?!


BOOBY DOOBY DO BOP! ONE MOMENT LESS THAN THIS IS FUTURE NOTHING-NESS ALREADY!
LET US BOOGY!
BBRRAAAP!
NEXT: DIGGING H.P.L.

ABOUT OUR RATTLERS

Matthew Coyle is twenty-four and lives in Sydney, Australia. He completed two years of art school before beginning work on *Registry of Death.* This, his first published work, took two years to complete. On the rare occasion that he isn't drawing, Matthew works as a hospital orderly. He appears as the main character in *Registry of Death,* as do many of his friends (and ex-friends . . .)

Matt Howarth, a storyteller with graphic obsessions, is probably best know for his *Those Annoying Post Bros.* and *Savage Henry* comic book series, but he is also the creator/writer/artist of a vast library of other works, including *WRAB: Pirate Television,* the *Keif Llama: Xeno-Tech* series, the *Konny & Czu* series, his *Sonic Curiosity* music review strips, and a number of horror strips for *Taboo* and *Fly in My Eye.* He is fanatically dedicated to the work-force ethic. His strongest influences have been the writings of Philip K. Dick and the music of French jazz band Magma and Canadian industrial band Skinny Puppy.

Peter Lamb is a mysterious figure. All we really know about him is that he is from Australia, he hangs out with this weird guy called Matt Coyle, and his favorite food is chicken. Want to know more? So do we.

Mark A. Nelson is an artist, teacher and dinosaur nut. His comic work started with a small independent publisher, Just Imagine Comics, and continued with companies such as First, Dark Horse (for which he created the successful first black-and-white *Aliens*), Marvel, Kitchen Sink and DC. His recent creator-owned works include *Blood and Shadows* for Vertigo, co-created with Joe R. Lansdale, and the forthcoming dinosaur adventure series *Thunder Hunters* for KSP, due out in late '96. On top of that, he just could be the world's biggest Richard Corben fan.

Thomas Ott is a Swiss surrealist artist and illustrator who cites musical inspiration for his dark, wordless tales from such diverse sources as Johnny Cash and Ministry. Zurich publisher Edition Moderne has released two anthologies of his brooding scratchboard work, *Tales of Error* and *Greetings from Hellville.* Look for book-length collections of his work from Kitchen Sink Press, coming at you next year.

FANG MAIL

Got a scare to share? A bone to pick? Write us at Fang Mail, Kitchen Sink Press, 320 Riverside Drive, Northampton, MA 01060 or e-mail kitchensp@aol.com

It was fascinating to see J. O'Barr's sketches in Death Rattle #3. I had shivers from page nineteen, page twenty had me in convulsions of joy, and the bottom panel on page twenty-one I wanted enlarged and on my wall! However, nothing prepared me for the despair of page twenty-five. Against a background of happiness, Eric sitting forlornly. *Sigh.* I love that drawing. Please tell me you will be bringing them out in some print form—posters, prints, anything.

Alternative comics ARE more challenging, and for me the progression from the staple commercial foil embossed, ladies-wearing-latex-thongs, polybagged, multi-color-separated, collectors' editions of the cloned-resurrection storylines and artworks towards the more thought provoking and gutwrenchingly bold stories and original artwork marks how important it is to read diversely and THINK about what I read and what makes it so special.

Claudia Halabi
united@ozemail.com.au

Did Simon Morse do two installments of Straightjacket Ninja and then walk off and leave you guys in the lurch or what? Thank you so much for giving Straightjacket Ninja a chance in *Death Rattle.* It really just shows the effort you guys are putting in to make the industry a better, more diverse place than what we have now.

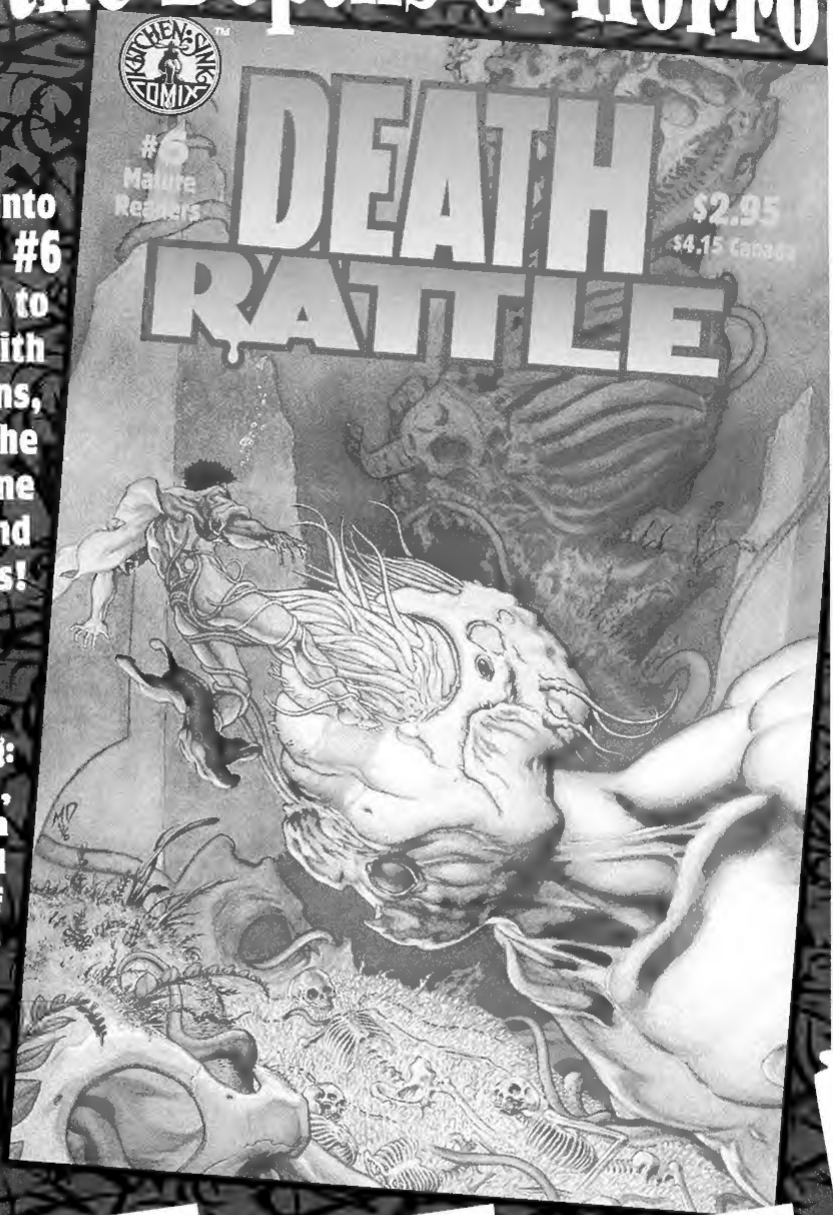
Bevan Kay

Simon Morse got up from under his tree in Northampton and disappeared back into the wilds of New Zealand, indeed leaving us only two installments of "Straightjacket Ninja," but he recently called us from the other side of the world and promised we'd have more "Ninja" as he finishes them.

Plumb the Depths of Horror

Dive into Death Rattle #6 —it's stuffed to the gills with horrifying aliens, monsters in the darkness, gruesome experiments, and bizarre surgeries!

Featuring: Michael Dubisch, Mark Nelson and the third installment of Tom Sutton's "Dr. Wrotwang's Wratzwerks"



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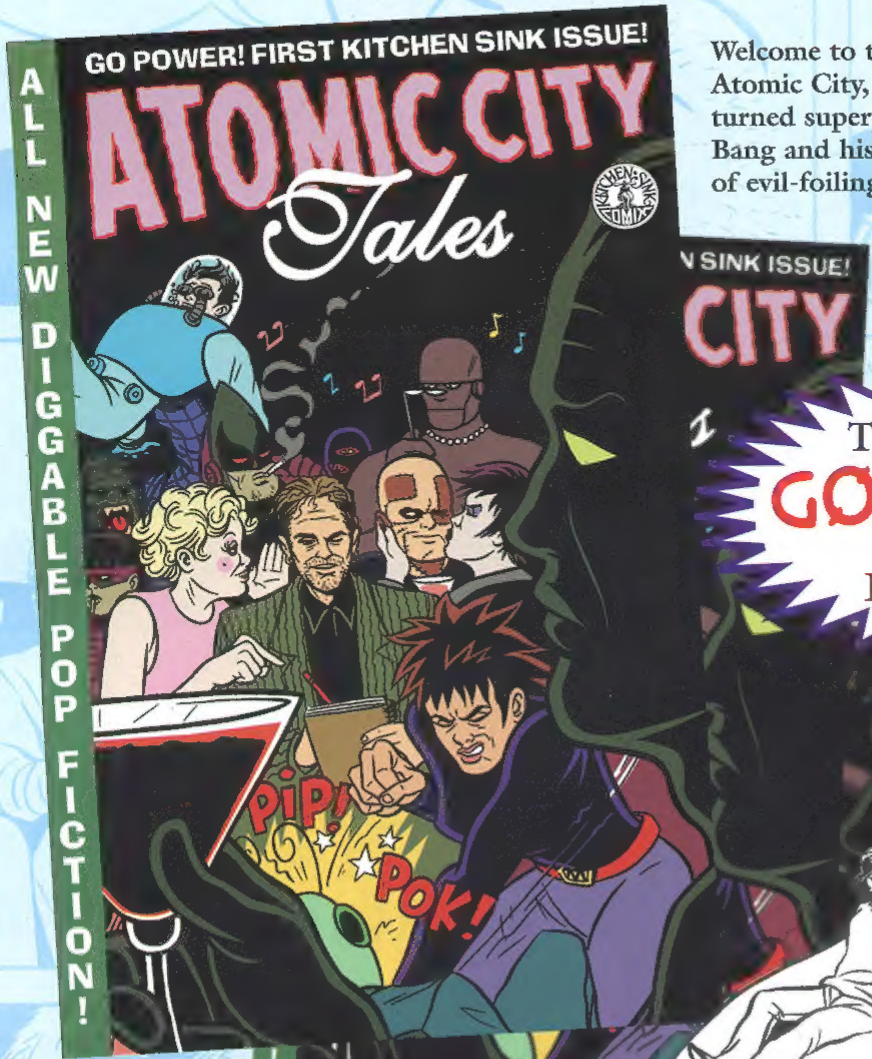

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